

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**STEVEN HASSELL, individually and on
behalf of all others similarly situated**

Plaintiff,

v.

**THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, PBC, et
al.**

Defendants.

CIVIL ACTION

NO. 24-2499-KSM

ORDER

AND NOW, this 14th day of June, 2024, upon consideration of the parties' joint request to stay proceedings, which is attached to this Order, it is **ORDERED** that this matter is **STAYED** pending mediation. **IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the parties shall file a joint status report by **July 12, 2024**.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

/s/ Karen Spencer Marston
KAREN SPENCER MARSTON, J.

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

STEVEN HASSELL, individually and on)
behalf of all others similarly situated,)
Plaintiff,) Civil Action No. 2:24-cv-02499
v.)
)

THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, LLC,)
Defendant.)
)
)
)
)

JOINT STIPULATION SEEKING STAY OF PROCEEDINGS

Plaintiff Steven Hassell (“Plaintiff”) and Defendant The Philadelphia Inquirer, LLC (“Defendant”) (collectively with Plaintiff, “Parties”) jointly seek the Court stay all case proceedings pending the outcome of a private mediation scheduled on July 8, 2024, and states as follows:

1. This case was originally filed in the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania on May 6, 2024 under Case Number 240500800.
2. Defendant was served with the Complaint on or about May 10, 2024.
3. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1446, on June 7, 2024, Defendant filed a Notice of Removal of this action to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.
See D.E. # 1. The basis for the removal as set forth in the Notice is diversity jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. §1332(d)(2) and 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d) (the Class Action Fairness Act of 2005) which bestows this Court with jurisdiction on cases involving a putative class action and: (i) at least one member of the putative class is a citizen of a state different from at least one of the Defendants

(“Minimum Diversity”); (ii) the number of proposed class members is 100 or more; and (iii) the amount in controversy as pled exceeds \$5 million in the aggregate, exclusive of interest and costs.

See 28 U.S.C. §§1332(d)(2), 1332(d)(5)(B), and 1332(d)(6).

4. Counsel for the Parties have been in regular communication regarding this matter since it was served and have decided to explore early resolution. To that effect, the Parties have engaged Bennett Picker of Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, LLP to serve as the private mediator in this matter. The Parties and Mr. Picker have scheduled a mediation to take place in this matter on Monday, July 8, 2024.

5. There are two other related cases filed against Defendant regarding the same facts as the *Hassell* matter: *Devine v. The Philadelphia Inquirer, LLC*, Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, Case Number 240500884, removed to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Case Number 2:24-cv-02503, and *Mosely v. The Philadelphia Inquirer, LLC*, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Case Number, 2:24-cv-02106. Counsel for the Plaintiffs and Defendant in these two matters are aware of the proposed mediation and participating in it on behalf of their clients.

6. Prior to and in preparation for the mediation, the Parties intend to exchange information regarding the case, including information setting forth the geographical make-up of the proposed class at issue.

7. The Parties seek a stay in this matter to provide additional time to explore settlement and to share information on the geographic make-up of the proposed class.

8. Further, Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 81(c) requires the Defendant to respond to the Complaint seven (7) days after the notice of removal is filed, or by June 14, 2024.

9. In light of the discussions regarding early resolution and the upcoming,

scheduled mediation, it is inefficient for Defendant to respond to the Complaint at this time. The proposed stay will not prejudice any party and, in fact, would avoid prejudice to the Parties.

10. To preserve the resources of the Parties and Court pending mediation, the Parties hereby request the Court stay all deadlines in the case, including any deadline for filing a motion for remand, pending the mediation scheduled for July 8, 2024. The Parties will provide a Joint Status Report to the Court on or before July 12, 2024.

WHEREFORE, the Parties respectfully request this Court enter an Order staying all proceedings in this case pending the upcoming mediation.

Dated: June 13, 2024

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Angelo A. Stio III
ANGELO A. STIO, III
Identification No. 202724
**TROUTMAN PEPPER HAMILTON
SANDERS LLP**
301 Carnegie Center, Suite 400
Princeton, New Jersey 08543
Tel.: (609) 951-4125
Angelo.stio@troutman.com

*Attorneys for Defendant The
Philadelphia Inquirer*

/s/ Ken Grunfeld
KENNETH JAY GRUNFELD
Identification No.: 84121
JEFF OSTROW, ESQUIRE*
Fla. Bar No. 121452
**KOPELOWITZ OSTROW
FERGUSON WEISELBERG
GILBERT**
65 Overhill Road
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004
Tel.: (954) 525-4100
grunfeld@kolawyers.com
ostrow@kolawyers.com

Attorneys for the Plaintiff

(*pro hac vice application forthcoming)

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on June 13, 2024, I sent the above Joint Stipulation Seeking Stay of Proceedings to the Court via email.

**TROUTMAN PEPPER
HAMILTON SANDERS, LLP**

/s/ Angelo A. Stio III
ANGELO A. STIO, III
Identification No.: 202724

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

STEVEN HASSELL, individually and on)
behalf of all others similarly situated,)
) Civil Action No. 2:24-cv-02499
Plaintiff,)
v.)

THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, LLC,)
)
Defendant.)
)

**[PROPOSED] ORDER GRANTING
STIPULATION SEEKING STAY OF PROCEEDINGS**

This matter is before the Court on the Parties' Stipulation Seeking Stay of Proceedings pending private mediation scheduled for July 8, 2024. In order to conserve the resources of the Court and Parties, the Motion is **GRANTED**. All case deadlines, including Defendant's deadline to respond to the Complaint and Plaintiff's rights to remand, are **STAYED** pending the mediation. The Parties will provide a Joint Status Report to the Court on or before July 12, 2024.

Entered this ____ day of June, 2024.

United States District Judge